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SIPDIS

FOR G/IWI

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: RRT ERBIL: EVENTS ON INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

REF: State 104380

This is an Erbil Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) cable.

¶1. This message responds to request for information on the RRT's actions to support the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women (reftel).

¶2. The KRG's Ministry of Sports and Youth hosted a cultural celebration to highlight awareness of the U.N.'s International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, November 25. Prime Minister Barzani and Mrs. Talabani, wife of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani presented an annual award for the protection of women to journalist Mohammad Tahir, who has been doing research on the effects of honor killings on Kurdish society. "Jin by Jin", a hard-hitting short on domestic violence created by a Salahaddin University cinema student was shown. (Comment: "Jin by Jin" refers to the tradition of exchanging wives when a family is too poor to pay for a dowry. For example, a brother/father gives his daughter/sister in marriage and in return gets a wife for himself.

End comment.) U.S. remarks (delivered by RRT Officer Marsha Lance) stressed the need for greater community-wide involvement to combat violence. The entire event was carried live on local TV and received extensive coverage in local print media.

¶3. The Erbil RRT awarded a Quick Response Fund (QRF) micro purchase of \$22,240 for the Asuda Organization to fund "16 Days of Activism Marking 25 November the International Day for Combating Violence against Women in Sulaimaniyah Province." This project will specifically target eight disadvantaged areas in the cities of Hawraman, Halabja, Said Sadiq, Pishdar, Rania, Sharbazher, Kalar and Chamchamal. Activities include printing and putting up banners carrying messages about the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women; producing and broadcasting radio programs about the event and inviting women's rights activists and advocates to talk about this day to the public; printing leaflets and pamphlets containing facts and information about 25 November as well as other issues related to rights of women; printing and distributing T-shirts, caps and other promotional materials; and conducting 16 seminars in secondary girls schools to explain to students the history of 25 November and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

¶4. In addition to RRT activities during the 16 days of activism, the RRT plans to work with the Kurdistan Democratic Party to host a digital video conference on gender-based violence with Washington-based experts through the G/IWI office, sometime in the spring of 2009.

¶5. While it is important to highlight this issue during the 16 days of focus, the RRT believes that a continued emphasis on the topic is very much needed in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Septel will discuss the manifestations of violence against women in the Kurdistan Region, and highlight other RRT programs addressing this issue.

